Met Office

January 2016

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

UK overview

At the start of January, the UK was in a very unsettled regime dominated by low pressure, with frequent active depressions and fronts, and record-breaking rainfall totals in north-east Scotland. It was a generally mild month in the south, but it turned colder everywhere for a few days around mid-month, with widespread frosts, and some snow, mainly over high ground and in the north. The last third of January was generally very mild and wet with strong winds, although Scotland was colder at times with wintry showers. Storm Gertrude caused widespread disruption near the end of the month, with damaging winds.

The UK mean temperature was 4.6 °C, which is 0.9 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. England and Wales were mildest relative to average, while northern Scotland was very close to average. With 148% of average rainfall, it was the equal-fourth wettest January in the UK series from 1910. Most of eastern Scotland and parts of north-east England had two to four times the normal rainfall, and for eastern Scotland it was the second wettest calendar month in the series, with December 2015 having been the wettest. The rain thus fell on already saturated ground and caused widespread flooding in Aberdeenshire. It was a wet month across most other areas but rainfall was much closer to average in western Scotland, the Midlands and East Anglia. Sunshine was generally near or above average in the south, but it was a dull month elsewhere, with 79% of average sunshine overall.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 16.5 °C was recorded at Achnagart (Highland) on the 24th. A minimum temperature of -12.4 °C was recorded at Kinbrace (Sutherland) on the 19th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 27th, 116.2 mm of rain fell at Nant-Yr-Ysfa, Rhondda (Mid Glamorgan). Wind gusts of 91 knots (105 mph) were recorded at Lerwick and Baltasound (both Shetland) on the 29th. A snow depth of 16 cm was measured at Spadeadam (Cumbria) on the 14th.

This satellite image shows clear skies across Wales and western England on Wednesday 20 January, with the UK under the influence of high pressure to the east. Lying snow can be seen across the high ground of Wales, the Pennines and Lake District. Low level fog can be seen in the Vale of Gloucester, and this remained in place all day; in the fog the daily maximum temperature on 20th was only 2.3 °C at Pershore, Worcestershire. The preceding night saw a sharp frost with temperatures falling widely below -5 °C across England and Wales. Copyright Met Office / NOAA.

Weather impacts

Although there was only one named storm this month (Storm Gertrude on the 29th) the legacy of the exceptionally wet December meant an ongoing threat of flooding in January in parts of the country, especially the north. North-east Scotland was especially affected by flooding from persistent heavy rain, and by the 13th, Aberdeenshire had already recorded its wettest January in a series from 1910.

Localised flooding occurred over many parts of the UK during the first three days. On the 4th, widespread flooding affected eastern Scotland, especially Aboyne (Aberdeenshire), causing road and rail closures, and there was heavy erosion on the banks of the river Dee. Flooding continued to cause transport problems across north-east Scotland and north-east England on the 5th.

Northern Ireland was also affected by flooding, and on the 6th/7th, homes and businesses on the shores of Lough Neagh were flooded as water levels reached a 30-year high. There was also transport disruption and a large landslide on farmland in County Antrim. In eastern Scotland, the 7th saw numerous road closures due to flooding, Blair Atholl (Perthshire) was cut off for a time and rail line between Aberdeen and Dundee was closed. The flooding in eastern Scotland continued into the 8th.

On the 11th, localised flooding of road and rail routes were reported across East Anglia and the Home Counties, with school children having to be rescued from a bus trapped in flood water in Farnham (Essex).

On the 13th and 14th, snow caused road closures in parts of Scotland and northern England, most notably closures of the A68. The 16th and 17th had further disruption due to snow, with significant disruption to Scottish football fixture lists and East Midlands Airport was closed for more than four hours.

On the 26th, two lorries were blown over on an exposed bridge on the A1, and the M8 was also closed fro a time. The M9 near Falkirk was closed due to surface water flooding, and pupils at Aberfoyle Primary School had to be rescued by boat after the nearby River Forth burst its banks. Further south, flooding affected road and rail links in Cumbria, with more localised property flooding. Coastal flooding closed a rail line in North Wales, and over 1,000 properties in Wales were affected by power outages.

On the 27th, flooding was reported in Northern Ireland, affecting a housing estate in County Down, while there was a landslide on the A2 and some road flooding. There were widespread reports of transport disruption across southern Scotland, with the Borders towns of Hawick and Jedburgh affected. The A7 and A68 south of the towns were both closed, and the rivers in both towns burst their banks. Road and rail travel across northern England was disrupted by flooding, particularly across Cumbria.

Storm Gertrude on the 29th closed the Tay and Forth Road Bridges during the morning, caused localised landslides, fallen trees, isolated cases of structural damage, overturned lorries on the M9, A96 and M74, closed schools, left around 8,500 properties without power across Scotland, and a man was taken to hospital in Edinburgh with head injuries after being hit by windblown debris. Across northeast England, around 6,500 properties suffered power outages, the Metro and east coast trains were disrupted due to overhead line problems and a small aircraft blown was over at Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Storm force winds for the Shetland Islands meant that all schools were closed, there were some power outages and overturned vehicles, but fortunately impacts were small considering the strength of the winds.

Snow on the 30th led to difficult driving conditions and some minor road closures in Scotland.

England diary of highlights

January began mild and unsettled with low pressure in charge, and some prolonged and heavy rain, particularly in the north-east. It turned colder around the middle of the month, with widespread frosts, and some of the

precipitation fell as snow, particularly over higher ground. The month ended very mild and changeable, with frequent rain and strong winds.

The mean temperature for the month was 1.1 °C above the long-term average. Rainfall was 150% of average, and much of Northumberland and Tyne & Wear had well over twice the normal rainfall. Sunshine was near or slightly above average in most southern counties, but it was a dull month in the north, and England had 87% of average sunshine overall.

1st to 9th:

The 1st was cloudy and mild, with rain, heaviest in the West Country, spreading north-east to all regions. Showery rain spread north-eastwards across the country on the 2nd, and a spell of prolonged and quite heavy rain spread from the south-west on the 3rd. After a dry and mild start for most on the 4th, with fog patches in the east Midlands, showers near the south coast became widespread, with sunshine mostly confined to the south. Fog lingered through the Thames Valley and parts of south Yorkshire on the 5th, with persistent rain in the far north-east and showers elsewhere, these wintry over the Pennines. Persistent fog again affected many eastern parts on the 6th, from the Home Counties to Yorkshire, with rain in the north-east turning light and patchy, and brighter conditions in the west. The 7th was a cloudy and very wet day over eastern coastal counties, with sunshine and scattered showers elsewhere. The 8th started dry and bright with frost for some central areas, but it turned more showery, especially in southern counties. It was wet everywhere on the 9th, especially in the north-west, and increasingly windy with a gust of 85 mph at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight).

10th to 14th:

It was cooler on the 10th with sunshine and showers for most places, the showers heaviest over the Home Counties. Rain spread north-eastwards on the 11th, followed by brighter spells for southern areas, with showers in the north-west turning wintry over higher ground. It was mainly dry and bright but very windy in the far south-west on the 12th, but there were showers and longer spells of rain elsewhere, the showers wintry on high ground. It started dry, clear and cold in most areas on the 13th, but showers and longer spells of rain spread from the west during the afternoon and evening. It was stormy over eastern coastal counties on the 14th, with a mix of rain, sleet and snow, and gusts to 67 mph at Weybourne (Norfolk). Snow lay 16 cm deep at Spadeadam (Cumbria).

15th to 21st:

It was cold and bright on the 15th with scattered showers, these wintry on high ground and mostly in the west. After a dry, sunny and frosty start on the 16th, with a minimum of -5.7 °C at Benson (Oxfordshire), an area of rain, sleet and snow spread south-east during the afternoon. The 17th was cloudy with patchy light rain and temperatures near average. Patchy rain persisted in the north-east on the 18th but cleared the south-west. It was dry with a widespread frost on the 19th, sunny in the south, but cloudier in the north. It was cold, dry and sunny for most areas on the 20th, with -8.8 °C recorded at Benson and 7.8 hours of sunshine at Hastings (East Sussex). After another cold sunny start over central and eastern parts on the 21st, it turned cloudier, with patchy rain in the south-west and north.

22nd to 31st:

It was cloudy, mild, wet and windy on the 22nd but brightened up from the west. The 23rd started bright in the east with some patchy fog in the south, but it was otherwise dry, cloudy and mild, and rain spread into the west late in the day. The 24th was a cloudy, breezy and very mild day with 15.9 °C at Keswick (Cumbria) and Oxford, although parts of the south had persistent fog. The 25th was dry and mild in the south, with sunshine in the south-east, but areas of rain spread eastwards across the north, locally heavy in the Midlands. It was wet and windy for many on the 26th, with 62.2 mm at Shap (Cumbria), and there was a gust of 71 mph at Loftus (Cleveland). It remained unseasonably mild on the 27th, with persistent rain in the south and showers further

north. The south was dry and sunny on the 28th, but showers in the north were replaced by widespread rain with increasingly strong winds. Storm Gertrude brought sunshine and wintry showers in the north on the 29th, with persistent rain spreading into the south and 80 mph gusts at High Bradfield (South Yorkshire). Early rain cleared the south on the 30th, otherwise it was a day of showers, these wintry in the north, and sunshine. It started cloudy, wet and windy for all parts on the 31st, but dried up in the south after midday.

Wales diary of highlights

January began mild and very unsettled with low pressure dominating, and frequent spells of heavy and persistent rain. It was colder around mid-month with some snow, particularly over higher ground. The month ended very mild and wet with strong winds.

The mean temperature for January was 1.3 °C above the 1981-2010 average. With 155% of average rainfall, it was the seventh wettest January in a series from 1910, although January 2014 was wetter. It was a dull January with 77% of average sunshine. Parts of the south-west had less than half the normal sunshine amount, but sunshine was close to average in the south-east.

1st to 5th:

Following a cool night, the 1st saw increasing cloud with rain, initially heavy in the Brecon area, spreading north, and it turned milder. It was wet in the south on the 2nd, and very mild again with Trawsgoed (Ceredigion) recording 12.8 °C, before turning drier in the evening. A similar day followed on the 3rd with rain throughout, clearing late afternoon and staying mild. It was mostly cloudy and wet and again mild on the 4th, wettest in the south, drier and brighter in the north. Another cloudy and fairly mild day followed on the 5th with scattered showers, these heaviest and most frequent near the south coast.

6th to 10th:

It was mainly dry and bright to start on the 6th, with just a few scattered showers, but rain spread from the south-west, turning heavy with some sleet and snow on high ground. After a wet start everywhere on the 7th with isolated fog patches in Powys, the rain cleared by lunchtime to leave sunshine and showers. It stayed relatively mild on the 8th with showers and longer spells of rain, heaviest in the west, but also some brighter spells. It was wet again on the 9th and windy with rain becoming heavy in the afternoon and early evening. Drier on the 10th after early rain over Anglesey moved away north, leaving a mix of sunshine and showers.

11th to 16th:

It was cooler on the 11th with bright spells, but showers, wintry on high ground, spread from the north. The 12th was generally cloudy and windy with frequent rain or showers, wintry over higher ground. Showers merged into longer spells of rain or snow on the 13th, clearing away in the evening. It was cold with bands of rain, sleet and snow early on the 14th, clearing away late morning, but wintry showers spread in from the north by evening. After a frosty start, the 15th was cold and breezy with sunshine and wintry showers, with 5 cm of lying snow at Sennybridge (Powys). The 16th started dry and bright but clouded over with prolonged rain, which turned to snow on high ground in the east, clearing by early evening.

17th to 24th:

It turned milder and cloudier on the 17th with patchy rain spreading north-east from mid-afternoon and becoming more widespread overnight. It stayed relatively mild on the 18th with patchy rain clearing north-east by late morning, followed by a dry but cloudy afternoon and evening. The 19th was mostly dry after early frost in the south-east, with sunshine in many areas. The 20th began very cold with -6.9 °C at Sennybridge, and a dry sunny day followed with 7.3 hours of sunshine at Valley (Anglesey). Cloudy mild weather arrived on the 21st with patchy rain and temperatures exceeding 10 °C in the west. Rain cleared away during late morning on the 22nd, and the rest of the day was mainly dry, sunny, windy and mild with just isolated showers. The 23rd

started dry, cloudy, breezy and mild, and turned wet everywhere in the afternoon, though drying up later in the evening. Apart from occasional rain in northern parts, it was dry, breezy and very mild on the 24th with 15.8 °C reached at Prestatyn (Denbighshire).

25th to 31st:

It stayed mild with most places dry on the 25th, though with occasional patchy rain in the north and becoming increasingly windy during the evening. There was heavy rain and gale force winds on the 26th with 74.6 mm recorded at Capel Curig (Conwy) alongside 83 mph gusts. Very mild on the 27th with rain in the morning, clearing later but remaining very windy. The 28th saw heavy rain in the afternoon with 75 mm recorded at Capel Curig, and stronger winds later marked the approach of Storm Gertrude. The 29th saw very strong winds overnight with 78 mph gusts at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys), and widespread rain arriving by late evening. It was cooler on the 30th with rain in the south being replaced by showers and brighter spells for all. Mild, wet and windy weather returned on the 31st, but the rain became confined to the north coast by midday.

Scotland diary of highlights

January began very unsettled with low pressure in charge, and with record-breaking rainfall in the north-east. It was generally cold during the middle third of the month with some frost and snow, but the last third of the month saw a return to very mild and wet weather with strong winds.

The mean temperature for January was 0.5 °C above the long-term average. It was the fourth wettest January in a series from 1910, with 143% of average rainfall, and for Eastern Scotland it was the second wettest calendar month in the series (the preceding December being the wettest). With just 58% of average sunshine, it was the second dullest January in a series from 1929.

1st to 7th:

The 1st was cloudy and mild, with showers in the west, and more prolonged rain spread from the south during the evening. There was heavy rain in the east on the 2nd, and patchier rain elsewhere, and it was very mild, with gales over the Northern Isles. The 3rd was similar, with heavy persistent rain in Aberdeenshire, where Aboyne recorded 49.8mm, and winds reached gale force in the north-east, though it was mostly dry and cloudy in the west. It remained cloudy and wet in central and eastern parts on the 4th, with an intense band of rain moving into the Borders. It was cooler on the 5th with rain in the south and in eastern coastal counties, drier elsewhere but with some wintry showers over higher ground. On the 6th, persistent rain affected the Borders, Tayside and Aberdeenshire. It was wet in all parts on the 7th, as a band of rain moved eastwards, falling as snow over the mountains, and became slow-moving over Tayside, Grampian and Aberdeenshire with 68.4 mm at Dyce (Aberdeen), resulting in widespread flooding across Aberdeenshire.

8th to 13th:

The rain finally cleared by mid-afternoon on the 8th, but an area of sleet and snow headed north through the Borders and into the Central Lowlands. Rain, sleet and snow eased on the 9th, but heavier rain arrived from the south-west late in the day. Rain and gales affected the Northern Isles on the 10th, and further rain mainly affected Lothian and Strathclyde. Belts of rain moved slowly eastwards on the 11th, turning wintry in the north, but sunshine was plentiful in Tayside, Fife and Berwickshire. It was bright over the Northern Isles on the 12th, but otherwise cloudy, cool and breezy with frequent rain or showers, some wintry. There were more wintry showers in the north on the 13th, while it was dry and cold elsewhere, but a mix of rain, sleet and snow spread from the west late in the day.

14th to 19th:

It was dry, bright and cold for most parts on the 14th, but with widespread wintry showers in the north-west, and a mix of rain and hill snow for the Borders. It was cold on the 15th too, sunny in the south-east but cloudier

in the north-west, with scattered wintry showers especially affecting the north. The 16th started cold and dry, but rain, sleet and snow spread south-east during the day. The snow was heaviest in the south-west, with 10 cm lying at Eskdalemuir (Dumfries & Galloway). Following a cold start, the 17th was mainly dry, with sunshine in the north and east. It was cold and dry in the north on the 18th, but cloudier further south with some rain, sleet and snow. A minimum of -12.4 °C, the month's lowest, was recorded at Kinbrace (Sutherland) on the 19th, but a thaw set in across lowland parts of the south.

20th to 25th:

The 20th was sunny in the north-east, but otherwise cloudy with a few patches of rain. The 21st started frosty but became cloudy, wet, windy and mild, then drier by evening. Early rain was followed by a bright, mild and windy day on the 22nd, with scattered showers. It was cloudy, breezy and mild on the 23rd, and rain spread from the south after dark. It started wet everywhere on the 24th, then turned mostly dry, cloudy and very mild with 16.5 °C at Achnagart (Highland), the month's highest. The 25th was mild too, but turned increasingly wet from the west.

26th to 31st:

Early heavy rain on the 26th turned to snow on high ground in the north, but it stayed mild elsewhere, with gales in the west. The 27th was colder, with rain in the south and wintry showers in the north-west. The 28th brought heavy rain in the north-west, with 78.2 mm at Kinlochewe (Highland), and increasingly strong winds. There was further snow on high ground in the north. Storm Gertrude brought widespread storm-force winds overnight with 105 mph gusts recorded at Lerwick (Shetland) followed by a day of wintry showers. There were further wintry showers on the 30th, with gales in the Northern Isles, and a snow depth of 6 cm at Aviemore (Inverness-shire). The 31st was cloudy and breezy with rain spreading north-eastwards to all areas from late morning, and snow on higher ground.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

January began very wet and unsettled with low pressure dominating, and temperatures mostly close to the seasonal average. It was colder around mid-month with some snow, especially over higher ground. The last third of the month was generally very mild and changeable with strong winds.

The mean temperature for January was 0.8 °C above the long-term average. Northern Ireland had 151% of average rainfall overall, making it the seventh wettest January in a series from 1910, and parts of County Down had twice the normal rainfall. It was a dull month with just 77% of average sunshine.

1st to 9th:

The 1st was a cloudy day, and it became increasingly mild, windy and wet. The rain persisted overnight and into the 2nd, but retreated around midday, allowing a drier afternoon and evening. The 3rd was another wet day, though the rain cleared late afternoon, leaving a dry evening. Cloud and rain persisted all day on the 4th, especially in southern parts with rainfall totals in excess of 25 mm. The 5th was cloudy with rain or showers for all parts, these heaviest in the east and north, and it turned cooler. The 6th was another cloudy day with isolated showers near the east coast, and rain spreading into the west gave 41.2 mm at Ballypatrick (County Antrim). Early rain cleared the north-east on the 7th, leaving bright and mostly dry weather with just scattered showers, and it turned colder. The 8th was another cool day with rain during the morning, but it became drier and brighter late in the day. A cool and overcast day followed on the 9th, and after a quiet start, it became wet and windy.

10th to 16th:

It was drier on the 10th with bright periods, but breezy near coasts in the north-east. Early rain cleared on the 11th, leaving a showery day, the showers heaviest in the west and wintry over the Sperrin and Antrim

mountains, with a strong north-westerly wind. Early rain cleared on the 12th followed by brighter showery weather, though the showers faded late in the day, and the showers were wintry over higher ground. The 13th started cloudy with rain or sleet, but turned drier (though still cloudy) in the afternoon. There was a dry bright frosty start to the 14th, but bands of rain, sleet and snow spread from the north from early afternoon. After another frosty start, the 15th was cold and breezy with sunshine and wintry showers, with 6 cm of lying snow at Lough Fea (County Londonderry). The 16th was cold and increasingly cloudy, with some patchy rain, falling as snow on higher ground away from coasts, but it became drier from mid-afternoon.

17th to 24th:

Milder conditions spread from the west on the 17th, following a dry start, with widespread rain from mid-afternoon onwards, and some snow on higher ground. Mild and cloudy on the 18th, with patchy rain lingering near northern coasts. The 19th was cloudy and mostly dry with mist patches and temperatures close to the seasonal average. The 20th had a frosty start with a minimum of -4.4 °C at Katesbridge (County Down), and it was a generally dry sunny day with 6.9 hours of sunshine at Aldergrove (County Down), but cloud and rain moved into the west late in the day. It was very mild, wet and windy on the 21st, but turned drier in the afternoon, with temperatures widely exceeding 10 °C. The 22nd was a mild and windy day with some sunshine and occasional showers. The 23rd started breezy and dry, but turned wet in the afternoon. It was very mild again on the 24th, and despite overcast skies, the temperature reached 15.2 °C at Peatlands (County Armagh), the highest maximum of the month.

25th to 31st:

It remained very mild on the 25th, with some early sunshine, but heavy and persistent rain spread from the west and it became increasingly windy. Remnants of the American Storm Jonas blew through on the 26th with widespread heavy rain and gale-force gusts near coasts, while it stayed very mild. It was cooler on the 27th, with some brighter spells but also patchy rain, turning showery by evening. It was increasingly windy on the 28th with showers replaced by persistent rain in the evening. Storm Gertrude gave gale-force winds with rain overnight, followed by a showery day on the 29th, with 85 mph gusts at Orlock Head (Down). The 30th was a cool day, with sunshine and wintry showers, and strong winds along coasts in the north. It was cloudy, mild, breezy and wet on the 31st.

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Met Office